

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-7

NEW YORK TIMES  
4 JUNE 1980

## CLARK WOULD TAKE PLACE OF HOSTAGES

Ex-Attorney General Makes Offer in  
Teheran — Asks Iran to Free  
‘These 53 Little People’

By JOHN KIFNER

Special to The New York Times

TEHERAN, Iran, June 3 — Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, calling on the Iranian authorities today to “free these 53 little people,” volunteered to take the place of any of the American Embassy hostages if it would help end the crisis.

His voice sometimes catching with emotion, he said he was making the offer because he was “so sure that it is imperative that the hostages be released now, that it is so important to the fulfillment of the Iranian revolution, which it is damaging in a hundred ways; so important to the individual justice and rights of the hostages, and it is so important to peace on earth.”

Mr. Clark, who is leading a group of 10 Americans at an Iranian-sponsored conference on “American intervention” here, in defiance of an American ban on travel, made his appeal in a speech to the conference this afternoon.

### ‘A Delicious Excuse to War’

The holding of the hostages, he said, “provides the excuse for the power of intervention; the power of imperialism — never doubt it — a delicious excuse to war, to dominate, to intervene.”

There was no immediate response from the Islamic militants, who seized the hostages in the American Embassy seven months ago and demanded that the deposed Shah be returned here for trial. Last fall, when Mr. Clark attempted a mediation mission, the militants denounced him as having served in the American Government during the Vietnam War and said he was suspect because he had headed the Justice Department.

The conference, which is being held to “study and debate” the role of the United States in Iran, is sponsored by President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr and his associates. This element of the revolutionary leadership has been eager to end the hostage crisis, but has met with continued resistance and defiance both from the militants and their allies in the Islamic fundamentalist clerical faction.

### Offer Causes Consternation

Mr. Clark’s offer caused some consternation among the other members of the American delegation. The delegation, it was learned, had discussed volunteering to serve as substitutes for the hostages as a gesture to convince the Iranians that even their friends regarded the impasse as harmful, but voted against it. Thus, sources in the delegation said, the other members were taken aback when Mr. Clark made the offer.

The former Attorney General did not appear at a news conference tonight held by the other members, who appeared to be reluctant to discuss their reactions to Mr. Clark’s offer in public. “I felt absolutely convinced that he was sincere,” said the Rev. Paul M. Washington, director of the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia. “I don’t know how that will help, but I am certain he was sincere.”

During the course of the speeches throughout the day representatives of three other delegations, from Yugoslavia, West Germany and Italy, also recommended that the hostages be released. The delegates, representing some 50 countries, are members of various liberation fronts, humanitarian groups and generally leftist political organizations.

### 2 Members to Meet Militants

Two members of the American delegation, the Rev. Charles Kimball, a Harvard divinity student, and the Rev. John T. Walsh, the chaplain of Princeton University, are to meet with the Islamic militants holding the United States Embassy, it was learned. An exchange of mail for the hostages has also been arranged through the delegation.

The American group is also planning to meet privately with what its members would only describe as “high-ranking” Iranian officials.

Mr. Clark’s address was delivered with the style and pace of a political stump speech, in contrast to the generally turgid denunciations of imperialism that filled most of the day. It drew a round of applause from the other delegates and a flurry of attention from reporters and photographers.

The speech was filled with praise for the Iranian revolution, which he called “a miracle for the age”; for Persian culture in general — “read their poets . . . Hafiz and Shiraz, oh, that Shakespeare could have written like that”; and was heavily larded with regret for America’s role in the world — “Vietnam, I weep at Vietnam.” He also charged that the abortive American commando raid to rescue the hostages was an “illegal” violation of Iran’s territory.

### ‘Where Is Allen Dulles?’

“The seizure of the hostages here is understandable in human terms, God knows it is understandable,” Mr. Clark said, “but it is not right. Of course it is not right.”

“For where is Allen Dulles? Where is Kermit Roosevelt? Where is Richard Helms or Henry Kissinger or Richard Nixon?” he went on, naming a series of Central Intelligence Agency or other Government officials who have been involved in Iran.

Mr. Clark argued that the continued holding of the hostages was leading to the defeat of efforts to restrain the C.I.A., to an increase in the defense budget and a belligerent attitude on the part of the American people. And, he said, it was damaging the prospects of the Iranian revolution.

“Holding the hostages takes the focus off the Shah,” he said. “The Shah is the villain of the act. People are thinking about the hostages all over the world while the Shah eats his caviar over in Egypt. That, I think, is a serious mistake.”

Shortly after Mr. Clark’s speech, another member of the American delegation, John Gerassi, a professor at Queens College and an organizer of the Vietnam War Crimes Tribunal, made a speech in which he paid tribute to a number of liberation struggles and asserted that he was not offering to substitute for a hostage.